

**State Board of Education  
English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)  
Discussion Summary  
June 18, 2002 Meeting**

**Introductions**

Rick Brandsma, executive director of the State Board of Education, made opening remarks to committee members. He thanked ELAC members for their participation and reiterated the State Board's commitment to ensuring California's 1.5 million English Learners have access to instructional materials aligned to the state's academic content standards. Specifically, he cited the State Board's historic January 2002 English-Language Arts/English Language Development textbook adoption. In that adoption, the State Board for the first time in California history adopted regular classroom textbooks that include specially designed instructional strategies to meet the needs of California's K-8 English learners.

Dr. Linda Gonzales, deputy superintendent of Compton Unified School District and chair of the English Learner Advisory Committee, led committee members in a round of self-introductions. Other ELAC members present were as follows: Mary Coronado Calvario, a teacher at William Land Elementary School in the Sacramento City Unified School District; Jaime Castellanos, assistant superintendent for secondary education in the Newport Mesa Unified School District; Lorraine Woo Fong, principal at Bennett-Kew Elementary School in the Inglewood Unified School District; and Dr. Robin Scarcella, associate professor at the University of California, Irvine. Not present were Peggy Thomas Harris, director of educational services for the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District; Rosa G. Molina, director of bilingual programs and professional development in the San Jose Unified School District; and Dr. Raquel Ramirez Ramsey, English learner coordinator at Beverly Hills High School in Beverly Hills Unified School District.

**California English Language Development Test (CELDT)**

Phil Spears of the California Department of Education's Assessment Division made a presentation to ELAC on the recently released statewide results from the 2001 administration of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). The CELDT is used to identify new students who are English Learners and to annually assess their progress toward proficiency in English.

The CELDT was given to California's 1.5 million English Learner students for the first time last year. Mr. Spears reported that of the 1.5 million, about 1.2 million English Learner students took the test for annual assessment purposes, with another 334,718 students taking the test for initial identification purposes.

Of the 1.2 million taking the test for annual assessment purposes, approximately 67 percent were enrolled in grades 1-6.

The CELDT consists of four parts: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students were scored by proficiency level -- Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced and Advanced.

Mr. Spears reported that 25 percent of the 1.2 million English Learners taking the test for annual assessment purposes scored at the early advanced and advanced levels. These students, he added, meet the criteria for possible reclassification from Limited-English Proficient (LEP) to Fluent-English Proficient (FEP). He noted that the criteria for review for possible reclassification consist of a student scoring at least at the Early Advanced level overall and at least the Intermediate level in all skill areas. Furthermore, schools and districts must consider other factors beyond CELDT results when determining whether a student should be reclassified. Those other factors include teacher evaluation, parental input and comparison of performance in basic skills.

In response to a question, Mr. Spears confirmed that the current statewide reclassification rate is about 9 percent. In the wake of the CELDT results, that rate could be expected to increase, he said.

He also noted that at the State Board's June monthly meeting, the CDE staff would present information matching the CELDT results with data from the California Standards Test in English-language Arts. On the basis of that matching data, the CDE is expected to make a recommendation to establish a range of performance in basic skills within which students could be reclassified from LEP to FEP.

### **English Learner Regulations**

Rae Belisle, chief counsel to the State Board, provided an overview of the English learner regulations adopted by the State Board at its May 2002 monthly meeting.

Ms. Belisle explained that the State Board adopted revised, permanent English learner regulations for two main purposes: 1) reorganization of previously adopted regulations that were located in different parts of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) into one, consolidated section of the CCR; 2) the need to clarify and address ambiguity in the ongoing implementation of Proposition 227, including the rights of parents to pursue a waiver of Proposition 227's mandate that English learners be placed in "sheltered English immersion" instruction.

Ms. Belisle highlighted a few major provisions in the regulations. She noted that the adopted English learner regulations allow educational staff, such as principals and teachers, to recommend a waiver to a parent. But the request for a waiver itself, the impetus for seeking a waiver, rests with parents at all times, she said.

In addition, Ms. Belisle said that the regulations strengthen district and school-site advisory committees on programs and services for English learners to boost parental participation and notification.

She also noted that the regulations state the State Board's intent to establish a statewide empirically based range of performance in basic skills to be used by districts and schools in the reclassification process.

ELAC panel members were provided with written materials that summarized the key provisions of the regulations.

[Key provisions in the regulations with regard to parental exception waivers are as follows:

- School districts must provide parents and guardians with a full, written description and, upon request from a parent or guardian, a spoken description of the structured English immersion program and any alternative courses of study and all educational opportunities;
- School principal and educational staff may recommend a waiver to a parent or guardian;
- Parents/guardians who are denied waivers must be informed that they may appeal to the local governing board of the school district if the local board has established that appeals process, or to a court;
- Section 11316 requires that notices required by the regulations comply with current *Education Code* section 48985, which provides that notices to parents or guardians must be in the primary language if 15 percent or more of the pupils enrolled in the school speak a single primary language other than English.

[Key provisions in the regulations regarding reclassification do the following:

- Specify that the notice to parents must include a description of the reclassification process and inform them of the opportunity to participate in the reclassification process;
- Clarify the State Board's intent to establish a statewide empirically based range of performance in basic English/language arts skills as required by *Education Code* section 313(d)(4);
- Conform to the language of *Education Code* section 313 requiring the state to establish procedures to be used for the reclassification of pupils;
- Reference the regulations adopted by the State Board for conducting the California English Language Development Test.]

Teacher Mary Coronado Calvario, a member of ELAC, said one area of concern is the work by school districts to monitor the progress of reclassified pupils, and how such monitoring should occur.

### **January 2002 English Language Arts/English Language Development Adoption**

Committee members held a discussion led by Dr. Gonzales on the need for appropriate teacher training on the instructional materials adopted by the State Board as part of the historic 2002 English-Language Arts/English Language Development adoption.

Last January, the State Board adopted specially designed instructional strategies to ensure English learners have equal access to the state's rigorous English-language arts academic content standards. All publishers who submitted instructional materials for the adoption were required to provide explicit programs for English learners, with the programs integrated into the basic materials and teacher editions.

As a result of the January adoption, California became the first state in the nation to require that all K-8 basic instructional programs include materials that can be used by the regular classroom teacher to teach grade-level content standards to English learners while they attain English-language proficiency.

In all, six basic RLA-ELD programs were adopted, five reading intervention programs for grades 4-8 were adopted, and one reading intervention program for English Learners in grades 4-8 also was adopted.

The result is that there is a specially designed program of instruction to provide intervention instruction to English learners in grades 4-8 who are entering those grades below the intermediate level of English proficiency.

Dr. Gonzales expressed strong support for the adoption, saying that the materials were very good overall and that some were excellent. She expressed concern that appropriate teacher training accompany the use of the materials, in particular staff development for less-experienced teachers.

For instance, she said, what a teacher needs to take from the materials to teach survival pieces to beginning students may not always be readily apparent to the less-experienced teacher.

Dr. Scarcella noted that teacher training is critical when one considers that teachers must teach different students who are at different proficiency levels but are in a single classroom.

Assistant Superintendent Castellanos noted that the challenge in his district is to get agreement among teachers on what materials work well, saying there isn't agreement on what works the best.

Principal Lorraine Woo Fong, who heads Bennett-Kew Elementary in Inglewood, told her colleagues on the panel that adopted materials meet the needs of English learner students and that her school already has a program of instructional strategies in place to ensure English Learners succeed in the classroom.

She noted that Bennett-Kew's student population is 53 percent Latino and 47 percent African American. More than 75 percent of its students receive free meals. Despite its status as a high-poverty school, Bennett-Kew's students are among the highest performing in the state.

The school has an API statewide ranking of 9, and a similar schools ranking of 10.

Ms. Woo Fong said the elements that make up Bennett-Kew's ongoing instructional program are:

- 1) Teacher collaboration, including grade-level team teaching
- 2) Pacing
- 3) Frequent assessment
- 4) An intervention program that identifies struggling students and addresses their needs

In addition, the school's language specialist was a regular classroom teacher, but is now part of the school's support staff. The language specialist models English-language development techniques and strategies for colleagues, and provides supplemental instruction to English Learner students in English-language arts.

Dr. Gonzales suggested that it would be useful to highlight these kinds of best practices that are leading to English Learner achievement in the classroom. She also said the panel would develop a recommendation to highlight the staff development and training needs of less experienced teachers with regard to the 2002 ELA/ELD adoption.

### **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**

Jan Mayer, of the CDE Language Policy and Leadership Office, provided an overview of Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act. Title III covers Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students.

Ms. Mayer outlined the highlights of Title III, as follows:

Overall Purposes:

- To help limited-English proficient (English Learners) and immigrant children attain English-language proficiency
- To assist English Learners and immigrant students to achieve at high levels in core academic subjects so they can meet same academic content standards applied to all other children
- To help state and local education agencies build high-quality language instructional programs
- To streamline programs through formula grants, with grants based 80 percent on number of English Learners and 20 percent on immigrant children

Grants to states will fund various activities, including professional development and technical assistance to eligible entities receiving Title III funds.

In terms of accountability, Ms. Mayer noted that NCLB requires annual testing of English Learners for English-language proficiency, and that English Learners demonstrate “Adequate Yearly Progress.”

She noted that California already administers the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) for two purposes: the initial identification of English Learners and to annually assess their progress toward English-language proficiency.

With regard to demonstrating adequate yearly progress, she said states are required to add English Learners as a significant subgroup. California, in turn, would most likely need to add English Learners as a significant subgroup as part of the state’s Academic Performance Index.

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